

LITTLE TOKYO COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEETING  
Japanese American National Museum/Aratani Central Hall  
100. N. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 12:00 pm-1:55 pm

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

In Attendance: Chris Komai, Chair; Kristin Fukushima, Managing Director; Shigeru Kikuna (Consulate General); Jan Fukuhara (LTCC/Teramachi); Evelyn Yoshimura (LTCC/LTSC); Alan Kumamoto (LTCC/HCNC); Toshio Terry Handa (LTCC/JCC); Chris Aihara (LTCC/LTSC); Dean Matsubayashi (LTCC/LTSC); Clement Hanami (LTCC/JANM); Stephanie Nitahara (LTCC/JACL-PSW); James Okazaki (LTCC/AAalc); Rev. Shumyo Kojima (Zenshuji); Roger Ishihara, Dan Taguchi (Union Church LA); Mike Murase (Budokan); Grant Sunoo (LTSC); Bill Watanabe (LTHS); Yoshihito/Junko Yonezawa(?) (Tanabata); Letitia Ivins, Wendy Cardova, Jeanmarie Hance (Metro); Mike Okamoto (Nisei Week); Alan Miyatake (Visitor); Faramarz Nabavi (Visitor); Midori Mizuhara (CARS/GoLT); Wendell Oyama (Centenary UMC); Scott Ito, Adina Mori-Holt (LTSC/Budokan); Michelle Yamashiro (Kizuna); Ken Onshi (Keiro); Chris Kokawa (Perfect Parking); Andie Kimura (GFBNEC); Janna Wong (VC); Audrey Chan (Metro Art); Kanji Sahara (Tuna Canyon); Gerald Fukui (Nisei Week); Jim Sherod (LT Library); 6 Unknowns.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

C. Komai called the regular monthly meeting of the Little Tokyo Community Council to order at 12:00 pm on Tuesday, April 24, 2018, in the Aratani Hall.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

**Motion.** A. Kumamoto moved to approve the minutes of March 27, 2018, seconded by E. Yoshimura. Motion was approved by a high plurality of the voting members.

III. PRESENTATIONS.

1. Delicious Little Tokyo. M. Mizuhara.

The Delicious LT festival promotes the community as a cultural hub and celebrates the history of LT. After reviewing the previous event, M. Mizuhara announced that the third annual festival will include art workshops, discounts/specials from vendors, food offerings, etc. Businesses and other organizations can participate by hosting workshops and demonstration tastings, promoting a special dish in the upcoming LT food guide, etc. Potential participants can email M. Mizuhara at [info@GoLittleTokyo.com](mailto:info@GoLittleTokyo.com). The deadline for submissions is 6/15/18. She added that regular monthly meetings will be held every fourth Wednesday at the 1<sup>st</sup> Street Metro office. In closing, she also announced that the kickoff event for Delicious this year will be Sake on the Rocks, hosted by the LTSC, on 7/20/18, at the JACCC. See website [ltsc.org](http://ltsc.org) for general and ticket information. C. Komai encouraged participation in the upcoming event.

## 2. Terasaki Budokan Update. M. Murase.

M. Murase reviewed the Budokan project. The first phase of demolition began several weeks ago with building abatement. Progress can be followed at [gilmanconstructionmedia.com/budokan.html](http://gilmanconstructionmedia.com/budokan.html) or [TerasakiBudokan.org](http://TerasakiBudokan.org). M. Murase reported that due to rising costs, the project needs an additional \$4MM to complete construction, and asked for the community's continued support. He also introduced Budokan team members S. Ito and A. Mori-Holt. Construction is scheduled for completion by 11/19.

Events to support the building campaign were also announced. A. Mori-Holt stated that the next Straight Outta Little Tokyo Music Fest will take place on 6/6/18 at Nishi Hongwanji. See website for details, [TerasakiBudokan.org/SOLT3](http://TerasakiBudokan.org/SOLT3).

## 3. Metro Regional Connector Station Art Update. A. Chan.

Visual presentation. A binder of proposed art display panels was also passed around during the presentation. A suite of 14 porcelain enamel panels to be placed at the station platform will include iconic images of LT. A. Chan can be contacted at [hello@audreychan.net](mailto:hello@audreychan.net). She has asked for input on the art project. She is also creating a glossary to accompany and explain the images. E. Yoshimura commented that she was impressed by the beauty and variety of the artwork, and stated that she was looking forward to the finished project.

## 4. Little Tokyo Council Update. West Santa Ana Branch – LTCC Position Discussion.

Visual presentation. K. Fukushima reviewed the four original northern alignment routes, A-D, and the new northern alignment routes, E-H, that Metro added in response to community discussion and input. See maps. There were several focus groups and community outreach meetings in April: 4/11, 4/17, and 4/19. An LTCC West Santa Ana Branch Survey explains the different routes along with the impacts, both positive and negative, to the area. Please fill out the survey so the Council can determine which routes the community prefers, and which routes cause the most concern.

The issues discussed included utility relocation, speculative development, neighborhood gentrification, general business displacement, and especially, loss of legacy businesses to the area. Discussion also focused on the southern cities' access and alignment to Union Station as a "one-seat ride," an Arts District station, and the fact that completion of the project has been moved forward from 2041 to 2028 for the LA Olympics. The question arose: what is best for Little Tokyo? Does the community wish access to the route, a nearby station, the development and benefits of area rail transport, etc.?

Survey results already received from stakeholders show that businesses generally support routes G and H with connection to the Red/Purple Metro lines. Opposing opinion focused on the increased traffic to the area, increased land values and rents, business displacement, and greater development near the stations along the routes. It was mentioned that route E has strong support from SFXC, whereas strong opposition was voiced to route F. K. Fukushima reiterated that the LTCC Board opposes routes A-D and F, and prefers that Metro continue to review routes E, G, H with connection to the

Red/Purple lines. Letters sent to Metro also expressed opposition to any at-grade or aerial construction along Alameda, and opposed a portal at Vignes Street in the Arts District. K. Fukushima also reported that Metro will hold two important meetings in May: 5/16 at 2 pm with the Planning Committee, which will select and recommend two or three routes for further review, and 5/24 at 9 am, a meeting of the full Metro Board, both to be held in Metro HQ at Union Station. C. Komai urged people to attend both meetings and voice their concerns during the public comment period, as this is the most effective way for the community to make itself heard, and to insure against negative impacts to the neighborhood. K. Fukushima reiterated the Council Board's recommendations to continue opposing original routes A-D as well as opposing any at-grade or aerial construction along Alameda. She also mentioned that the Council Board supports further study by Metro of routes E, G, and H on the condition that H is completed as a fully realized route with connections to the Red/Purple lines, and also continues to oppose F.

**Motion** as previously stated and recommended by the Council Board: B. Watanabe moved to approve the LTCC Board's recommendation "to support the further study of routes E, G, and H, by Metro," seconded by A. Kumamoto. Motion was approved by a high plurality of the voting members. K. Fukushima will forward a community template letter to address the above concerns. She mentioned that at this time all eight routes are still being considered, so the community needs to express its preferences by speaking at the upcoming meetings and/or writing letters to Metro.

#### IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS. (See also back of agenda.)

PCPC. K. Fukushima and J. Fukuhara. The PCPC and 7-Eleven are still negotiating conditions in exchange for the community's support. The current options approved and supported by both PCPC and Board/General Assembly are as follows: "That the store operate 24/7 hours without alcohol, or that alcohol off-site sales be offered without 24/7 hours of operation." The LTCC also voted and approved "to oppose the 7-Eleven request to allow off-site sales of alcohol and its proposed hours of operation," and also "to oppose the 7-Eleven store be located at Avalon Bay Apts. in LT." Discussion continued on opposing off-site alcohol sales, requiring on-site, in-person security, decreasing general store hours, dimming interior lights after hours, general cleanliness and trash disposal, monitoring illegal street/curb parking, etc. K. Fukushima stated the final recommendation and motion by PCPC: "To approve that on-site security be required as a condition to support the 7-Eleven CUP, seconded by A. Kumamoto," was approved in April. K. Fukushima then announced that at the prior Board meeting, the Board did not approve and pass the above motion. This means that the original motions approved remain in place. In closing, C. Komai reiterated an LT standing policy to oppose off-site alcohol sales. The public comment period is open until 5/7, and anyone interested can write/email [Fernando.Tovar@lacity.org](mailto:Fernando.Tovar@lacity.org), as well as [William.Hughen@lacity.org](mailto:William.Hughen@lacity.org).

#### PARKING COMMITTEE.

It was reported that a homeless encampment has appeared at the Toriumi Plaza/Aiso Garage, and the question arose whether designating the Plaza a public park would encourage the city to maintain the area.

#### METRO. REGIONAL CONNECTOR.

W. Cardova stated that additional construction street closures will occur on 4/28, 5/4, and 5/11. Please see the website, [metro.net/regionalconnector](http://metro.net/regionalconnector), for info regarding closures and updates. W. Cardova also announced that a free community celebration for the Regional Connector, “Next Stop: Halfway There,” will be held on 5/19, from 11 am-2 pm, at JANM. It will feature local entertainment, small business resources, giveaways, project information, etc.

#### MEMBERSHIP/NOMINATIONS COMMITTEES.

K. Fukushima reminded members that their dues have been grandfathered in through December 2018, although those who wish to may pay their annual dues this year. The Council is currently working on a marketing brochure, to be released at a later date. C. Komai announced that a slate of eight candidates has been drawn up for election/re-election to the Board this year. Several nominations to fill expiring and/or unfilled seats will be approved at the next Board meeting, with all the candidates voted on at the May/June meetings to begin terms starting July 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

M. Okamoto announced that the “Little Tokyo Open: The Art of Mini-Golf” will take place over two weekends, 4/21-22, and 4/28-29, at the JACCC Plaza. B. Watanabe reported that the “Imagine Little Tokyo Short Story” awards ceremony at Union Church was a success. He also mentioned that Jeff Chin, an LTHS member, has been awarded an Aurora grant to go to Japan, where he will research the life of Sei Fujii for a film project. There was an announcement with overview of the upcoming Tanabata festival. G. Sunoo announced the LTSC artists’ residency program, whereby artists are selected to work on projects that engage the community. Please see the LTSC website for details.

#### HCNC. CHINATOWN SUBDIVISION.

A. Kumamoto informed the General Assembly that HCNC has voted to oppose the Chinatown subdivision application. The vote will occur on 6/7. Mail-in ballots are available at the City Clerk’s office. All stakeholders can vote, but proof of eligibility is required. A. Kumamoto also mentioned that if the subdivision vote is successful, then the area including Chinatown, and smaller communities like El Pueblo, Victor Heights, and Solano Canyon, will be reorganized as HCNC North, leaving Little Tokyo and the Arts District to form their own combined or individual NCs. Please also refer to DONE for information about the upcoming subdivision election.

V. NEXT LTCC MEETING DATE. The next general meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 22, 2018, at 11:45 am at JANM.

#### VI. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair C. Komai adjourned the meeting at 1:55 pm.

K. Fukushima, Managing Director. J. Fukuhara, Secretary, minutes.